



## THE WORD

By

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Dear Reader,

At its most base and unflattering, writing is simply picking out some perceived piece of meaning from an observable world (of which there is a wide allowance of acceptable answers) and ascribing a word in which to communicate perception to others; and yet...in that speech act, in that use of the word that we dredge up from the muck, we transfer the spectrum of human consciousness.

How difficult could such a thing be?

There are entire sciences dedicated to the word.

Entire professions.

Entire beliefs.

Entire lives.

And you can probably argue that 90 percent of those are garbage if you were so willing to get boned up on the job and dedicate your life to the word.

When I think of “the word,” the first thing that comes to mind (and as I keep forgetting that I need to write this, it keeps perpetually coming back) is a copy of Bukowski’s *Sifting through the Madness for the Word, the Line, the Way* that sits on my shelf. I’ve read plenty of his books (he takes up a whole shelf), so the poetry isn’t what sticks out (it’s okay, like watching an old guy you care about fall asleep on a nice pillow and you whisper, “good job, you deserve it,” sweetly in his ear and blow him a kiss as you dim the lights) and there’s so much quantity of his words that you can become numb to them, taken all at once.

What sticks is the title.

I’d be curious to find a more concise, more apropos, description for the act of writing.

From such an absence of the hero, the act of writing is still, was always, the hero’s goal – a fist fight with the world for clarity, concision, and expression; the only noble pursuit left – to tell the truth (I’d like to capitalize the “T,” but I’m either too jaded or too tired to convene with the ephemeral and still entirely believe in an objective correlative or the Greeks); trying to pan gold out of hard rock and over all the destruction of eons; to walk the way of the word from the past and into a present so that you can pave your own.

If writing is life on the page, then how do you live your life?

And to which morpheme are you willing to go?

I still do not know.

In the great scope of time, there are only a small few that have been able to pull it off, they tend to be hotly debated for only a society or two and then left in the dust; and the ones that transcend time must constantly protect their corpse from being horse beaten.

And they do it for the word.

1) Because the bird is the word;

2) Because words trap us in a cultural consciousness yet dangle our freedom in front of our face, words are how I can describe accidentally running over a snake mowing my backyard or the

stylistic comparison between my aloe plant and my life; words let assholes like me engage with people all over the world looking for and creating more of the world with words; words can transcend time and space, but can't fully capture my son's stomping rage at having his toy whisk taken from him or why I spontaneously will cry during movies (it's because there is a lot going on, okay?) – both he and I would need a shitload of more words to get the point across as we'd prefer; words are what happen when the world is so overwhelming there is no other

way to describe it because the only way that it could possibly be true is if there is another there to reaffirm – otherwise you're simply alone in the madness.

I know that I am only so okay with words. I enjoy my short stories and poems because there is an ego in me that sees I wrote one good line and the other pages fell nicely around, and I even think I have a mild knack for writing about the fiction we publish here at Fleas on the Dog (though that can always be debated), but someday you read another story and you have to lean back and think to yourself how someone did it better.

Because words, in the right way, make you shiver.

In my own personal sense of humility, or perhaps admission of insanity, I think that everyone has their own madness – from the most mundane looking bastard (of whatever gender/sexuality) to the ubermensch (of whatever gender/sexuality) – and mine is probably not that different than most. Words, and how you use them in describing the face of reality, are our most dangerous wall and our greatest equalizer.

There will be blood.

Well, there is oftentimes blood.

But sometimes words, slapping the top of a lemon, work for you.

If you gave me all of my life and some weird sense of purpose, I could go on about words and still not quite lasso that moon.

I mean to say that I am going to stop here soon, but don't judge me too hard because I am sensitive and merely adding more dirt on a hole never quite able to be filled.

Words provide purpose because they innately represent a pure connection to another, and, in connection, in an audience, we can share the madness - that this world is more often than not hard and scrupulous and includes tinges of glory and shiny that we get to share. After, that connection can disintegrate either immediately or over time depending upon what else is said and the way in which they are said, but, for a brief moment, there is pure humanity (from its most picaresque to its most vile) and time to bask in the knowledge that you've touched the corona of the sun, the sharpest edge on the curve, the most beautiful thing that you have ever seen.

...

I always try to end these things by saying something smart, but I usually end up swearing.

Fuck.

To sifting,

Me